

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached replacement drawing sheet including Fig. 5 should replace the originally filed drawing sheet including Fig. 5. Fig. 5 is amended to add reference number --63--. This drawing amendment adds no new matter.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the previous amendments and the following remarks.

Before turning to the claims, a brief discussion of a connector according to this application's disclosure is provided. The connector includes a tubular male joint member 50, a liquid passage portion 12 having a liquid passage space 121 defined therein in fluid communication with an interior of the male joint member 50, and first and second valve bodies 6 and 7. The first valve body 6 has a head 61 and a neck 62 interconnecting the head 61 and the liquid passage portion 12, the neck 62 being thinner than the head 61. The first valve body 6 also has a slit 63 extending from a top surface 611 of the head 61 to the liquid passage space 121. The second valve body 7 has a head 71 and a neck 72 interconnecting the head 71 and the liquid passage portion 12, the neck 72 being thinner than the head 71. The second valve body 7 has a slit 72 extending from a top surface 711 of the head 71 to the liquid passage space 121. As best seen in Fig. 5, a straight portion (i.e., a straight interior wall) which defines a part of the liquid passage space 121 connects an end of the slit 63 of the first valve body 6 and an end of the slit 73 of the second valve body 7.

Turning now to the claims, Claim 1 is rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No 5,676,346, hereinafter Leinsing.

Amended Claim 1 recites a connector including, *inter alia*, a tubular male joint member, a liquid passage portion having a liquid passage space defined therein in fluid communication with an interior of the male joint member, and first and second valve bodies. The first valve body has a head and a neck interconnecting the head and the liquid passage portion, the neck being thinner than the head. The first valve

body also has a slit extending from a top surface of the head to the liquid passage space. The second valve body has a head and a neck interconnecting the head and the liquid passage portion, the neck being thinner than the head. The second valve body has a slit extending from a top surface of the head to the liquid passage space. A straight portion which defines a part of the liquid passage space connects an end of the slit of the first valve body and an end of the slit of the second valve body.

Leinsing discloses a connector valve including a piston element 44 having a slit 26 and disposed at a connection port 18, as well as a Y-branch port 22. The Official Action rejects Claim 1 based on the belief that Leinsing's connection port 18 constitutes a first female joint port, that Leinsing's piston element 44 with a slit 26 constitutes a first valve body having a slit, that all of the interior space illustrated in Fig. 5 of Leinsing constitutes a liquid passage portion, and that it would have been obvious to an ordinarily skilled artisan to "supplement the [Y-branch port 22] of Leinsing's connector with a second valve body and second female joint port of the same construction as the first valve body and first female joint port...". However, even accepting these interpretations for discussion purposes, Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable.

Specifically, even with the proposed modification, there would be no straight portion defining a part of Leinsing's interior space which connects an end of the slit 26 of the piston 44 with an end of a slit of a piston provided at the Y-branch port 22. Indeed, such slits would be located in two different branches of the connector and any connection of those two slits would involve an interior angle of the interior space.

Accordingly, Leinsing does not disclose or render obvious a connector including a liquid passage space, a first valve body having a head and a slit

extending from a top surface of the head to the liquid passage space, a second valve body having a head and a slit extending from a top surface of the head to the liquid passage space, and a straight portion which defines a part of the liquid passage space connecting an end of the slit of the first valve body and an end of the slit of the second valve body, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 1.

Claim 1 is therefore allowable over Leinsing, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 is also rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No 5,676,346, hereinafter Leinsing.

Amended Claim 5 recites a connector including, *inter alia*, a tubular male joint member, a liquid passage portion having a liquid passage space defined therein in fluid communication with an interior of the male joint member, a first female joint port, a second female joint port, a first valve body, and a second valve body. The first valve body is disposed in the first female joint port, is made of an elastic material, and has a slit, and the second valve body is disposed in the second female joint port, is made of an elastic material, and has a slit. A straight portion which defines a part of the liquid passage space connects an end of the slit of the first valve body and an end of the slit of the second valve body.

Leinsing discloses a connector valve including a piston element 44 having a slit 26 and disposed at a connection port 18, as well as a Y-branch port 22. The Official Action rejects Claim 5 based on the belief that Leinsing's connection port 18 constitutes a first female joint port, that Leinsing's piston element 44 with a slit 26 constitutes a first valve body having a slit, that all of the interior space illustrated in

Fig. 5 of Leinsing constitutes a liquid passage portion, and that it would have been obvious to an ordinarily skilled artisan to "supplement the [Y-branch port 22] of Leinsing's connector with a second valve body and second female joint port of the same construction as the first valve body and first female joint port...". However, even accepting these interpretations for discussion purposes, Claim 5 is clearly distinguishable.

Specifically, even with the proposed modification, there would be no straight portion defining a part of Leinsing's interior space which connects an end of the slit 26 of the piston 44 with an end of a slit of a piston provided at the Y-branch port 22. Indeed, such slits would be located in two different branches of the connector and any connection of those two slits would involve an interior angle of the interior space.

Accordingly, Leinsing does not disclose or render obvious a connector including a liquid passage space, a first valve body disposed in a first female joint port, and having a slit, a second valve body disposed in a second female joint port and having a slit, and a straight portion which defines a part of the liquid passage space connects an end of the slit of the first valve body and an end of the slit of the second valve body., and a straight portion which defines a part of the liquid passage space connecting an end of the slit of the first valve body and an end of the slit of the second valve body, in combination with the other elements recited in amended Claim 5.

Claim 5 is therefore also allowable over Leinsing, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 5 is respectfully requested.

New Claim 24 recites a connector including, *inter alia*, a tubular male joint member, a liquid passage portion having a liquid passage space defined therein in

fluid communication with an interior of the male joint member, a first female joint port, a second female joint port, a first valve body, and a second valve body. The first valve body is disposed in the first female joint port, is made of an elastic material, and has a slit, and the second valve body is disposed in the second female joint port, is made of an elastic material, and has a slit. The central line of the first female joint port and the central line of the second female joint port are skew lines with respect to each other.

New Claim 24 is also allowable for at least the reason that, as correctly noted in paragraph "13" of the Official Action, Leinsing's central lines of the first and second female joint ports are not skew.

The dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent claims. Thus, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in the dependent claims is not set forth at this time.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful

in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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